

**Standard 8-7:** The student will demonstrate an understanding of South Carolina's economic revitalization during World War II and the latter twentieth century.

**8-7.4** Explain the factors that influenced the economic opportunities of African American South Carolinians during the latter twentieth century, including racial discrimination, the *Briggs v. Elliott* case, the integration of public facilities and the civil rights movement, agricultural decline, and statewide educational improvement. (H, P, E)

**Taxonomy Level:** B 2 Understand / Conceptual Knowledge

**Previous/future knowledge:**

In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, students summarized the key events and effects of the civil rights movement on South Carolina, including the desegregation of schools (*Briggs v. Elliott*) and other public facilities and the acceptance of African Americans' right to vote (3-5.6).

In 5<sup>th</sup> grade, students explained the advancement of the civil rights movement in the United States, including key events and people: desegregation of the armed forces, *Brown v. Board of Education*, Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Malcolm X (5-5.1).

In United States history, students will explain the movements for racial and gender equity and civil liberties, including their initial strategies, landmark court cases and legislation, the roles of key civil rights advocates, and the influence of the civil rights movement on other groups seeking ethnic and gender equity (USHC-9.5).

**It is essential for students to know**

Although this indicator focuses on economic opportunity of African Americans, the primary strand is history so emphasis should be placed on the historical development of the civil rights movement in South Carolina and how it has impacted economic opportunities for African Americans.

Jim Crow laws, restrictions on voting by such means as poll taxes and literacy tests, and discrimination in the workplace (8-5.1), continued to limit the economic and social opportunities of African Americans in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is important for students to understand that the movement for civil rights in the United States was continuous from the colonial period. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, organizations such as the NAACP, the Congress of Racial Equality, the National Association of Colored Women, and the National Urban League actively sought the recognition of African American rights. Despite their contributions to all U.S. war efforts, African Americans were forced to tolerate second class citizenship. In the post World War II period, the movement for civil rights accelerated as a result of the "victory abroad, victory at home" (Double V) campaign of African Americans, the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the influence of mass media and the leadership of Martin Luther King, Jr.

In 1948 in South Carolina, the modern civil rights movement started with a simple request. The parents of some African American students in Clarendon County, South Carolina requested a bus to take their children to their all-black school. Some children had to walk 18 miles to and from school each day. Since the county's [2375] white children had [30] school buses for their use and its [6531] black students had none, parents at Scott's Branch School felt that the "separate-but-equal" doctrine established by the Supreme Court in *Plessy v. Ferguson* required that the school district at least pay for the gas and repairs on the used bus that the families had bought for their children. Parents did not originally seek integration but instead some equality. The case was dismissed due to a technicality. With the assistance of local leaders and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, [25] parents brought suit against the school district in a new case, *Briggs v. Elliot*, for equal treatment under the law as required by the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment. In federal district court, the state's counsel admitted that the separate schools for

African Americans were unequal but claimed that the state had initiated a building program that would bring the African American schools up to par with the white schools (see below). The court, therefore, ruled in favor of the school district. The NAACP then appealed the case to the United States Supreme Court, combining it with others like it from several states. . *Briggs v. Elliot* was first of five cases that became part of the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* decision that was decided in 1954. In *Brown* the Supreme Court ruled that separate was inherently unequal. The court further ruled that African American students should be integrated into classrooms with white children with “all deliberate speed.”

The *Brown* ruling was met with widespread and sometimes violent opposition and delay, delay, delay. The governor of South Carolina [James F. Byrnes] encouraged this resistance. White Citizens Councils were established to coordinate efforts to intimidate African Americans who petitioned for equal treatment and to label whites who supported the court’s ruling as traitors to their race. South Carolina’s Senator Strom Thurmond authored the Southern Manifesto, signed by all but three of the Congressmen from the Deep South [101 in total]. This document condemned the *Brown* decision for upsetting the relationship of whites and African Americans in the South and encouraged resistance to desegregation. Resistance included the establishment of numerous ‘white flight’ private academies, school choice, and plans for the voluntary closing of public schools. For more than a decade a South Carolina committee appointed by the governor sought legal means to avoid integration of South Carolina’s public schools. Similar actions were taken in other southern states. It would be the early 1970s before full-scale integration occurred in most South Carolina schools.

However, the **civil rights movement** had begun in South Carolina and other southern states and would not be stopped. As a result of Rosa Parks’ and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the Supreme Court ruled that city buses could not be segregated. But South Carolina bus companies ignored the ruling. When students staged a sit-in at a North Carolina lunch counter, South Carolina students followed suit throughout the state. Protests and demonstrations throughout South Carolina echoed the national movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr. As time passed, the response of the white leadership of South Carolina, led by Fritz Hollings, began to be tempered by their desire to attract economic investment to the state (8-7.1). Pictures of protests and violence in other southern states carried on nationwide TV and in newspaper articles did not encourage such investment. The Arkansas economy had been hurt significantly by what happened in Little Rock. Consequently in 1963, South Carolina began to slowly and deliberately integrate public facilities by beginning at the college level with Clemson College and the University of South Carolina without the violence which engulfed campuses in other southern states. This relatively peaceful integration of public facilities in South Carolina was marred by the violence of the Orangeburg Massacre when black students protesting an all-white bowling alley were shot by the highway patrol and the National Guard. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were enforced in South Carolina and public schools were finally desegregated as a result of another court ruling 15 years after the ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*.

The economic opportunities of African-American farmers, sharecroppers and tenant farmers were being undermined by the **agricultural decline** (8-7.3). However, opportunities were opening up as a result of the civil rights movement and industrial growth in South Carolina. In the early 1960s, the textile industry, long a whites-only employer, began to hire African-American workers. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination in the workplace and provided additional job opportunities for African Americans when enforced.

While the *Briggs* case was still pending in the federal courts [1951], South Carolina launched a statewide effort to improve education by making separate African American schools equal to schools for whites and

therefore able to remain segregated under the *Plessy* doctrine. Determined to maintain segregation, the state was also willing to continue to provide expensive separate professional programs or pay high tuition rates for African American students to attend out-of-state professional programs rather than admit African American students to professional programs at the all white state schools. To fund these efforts, the state legislature passed a sales tax to fund millions of dollars in buildings that improved schools for African-American students significantly. At the same time, in order to address inequities in districts that offered just whites-only facilities, the state also began a process of consolidating school districts from over 1,000 to the current 85. As a result, the one-room schools attended mainly by African Americans in rural areas closed. As a result of the resistance movement that developed in response to the *Brown* ruling, the state legislature passed a compulsory education law. The courts ruled that freedom of choice plans were an unacceptable means of integrating the schools. Eventually educational opportunities for African American and rural white students alike were improved when schools were integrated as a result of another court order in the early 1970s. The Education Improvement Act of the 1980s and Educational Accountability Act of the 1990s were passed to ensure that all children have the opportunity to learn. However the achievement gap continues to be the legacy of years of discrimination in educational opportunity.

### **It is not essential for students to know**

Students do not need to remember the names of the governors who served during the civil rights era. Students do not need to remember the names of the African American leaders such as Reverend Joseph DeLaine, Modjeska Simpkins, Thurgood Marshall and SC Justice Julius Waites Waring, who were instrumental in the *Briggs* case. Students do not need to know the specifics of South Carolina's efforts to delay the implementation of integration such as that between 1951 and 1966, it was Lawrence Gressette who chaired a South Carolina 15-man committee appointed by the Governor Barnes to seek legal means to avoid integration of South Carolina's public schools. Similar actions were taken in other southern states.

Students do not need to remember civil rights activities that took place in other parts of the South, such as the Birmingham campaign or the Selma March. They do not need to know how the civil rights movement impacted politics in South Carolina, changing the state from a Democratic stronghold to a Republican stronghold as a result of the support of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson for the civil rights movement and Richard Nixon's Southern Strategy. Students do not need to know the details of the education accountability program or current efforts to amend it.

### **Assessment Guidelines:**

Appropriate assessments will require students to **explain** how economic opportunities for African Americans changed from discrimination to opportunity as a result of the *Briggs v. Elliott* case, the integration of public facilities and the civil rights movement, agricultural decline, and statewide educational improvement. Students should be able to **summarize** the resistance to civil rights for African Americans in South Carolina. Students should be able to **compare** the civil rights movement in South Carolina with the movement in other parts of the South. Students should be able to **interpret maps and graphs** related to educational and economic changes in South Carolina as a result of the civil rights movement.